



September 22, 2010

Testimony to Illinois Health Reform Implementation Council
Presented by Janine Lewis, Executive Director
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition

Good evening. My name is Janine Lewis, and I'm the new Executive Director of the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition. We're a nonprofit organization that focuses on the promotion and improvement of health outcomes for women, children, and their families through advocacy, education, community empowerment, and partnership-building efforts throughout the state.

Thank you to Chairman Gelder, Director McRaith, and the rest of the Council members for the opportunity to address you this afternoon about our recommendations for statewide implementation of health care reforms contained in the federal Affordable Care Act. In particular, I'd like to highlight some issues pertaining to the Exchange and its potential impact on the maternal and child health of Illinois residents.

I'd like to quickly highlight four main points. From our experiences in community-based advocacy and programming, we have learned the importance of sharing health-related information in simple terms that lay consumers can understand, and in places and formats that are suitable for residents. Recent conversations with our community-based staff have revealed that consumers are unsure of the changes and provisions that the ACA provides, both those that are effective on September 23th, and those that will launch in 2014. Thus, it is important that the Illinois Exchange is presented in as user-friendly a format as possible, and that for those that may not have access to a computer or the Internet, accessible locations in communities are strategically designated and publicized. To achieve this goal, we would like to see the State of Illinois pilot test their informational materials and Exchange platform with consumer advocates prior to its launch.

Additionally, as many of the newly eligible populations for Medicaid expansion will be hard to reach, let's apply the lessons learned from the All Kids outreach strategies, such as utilizing application agents based in trusted and respected community based agencies that are culturally and linguistically congruent with the residents in their target areas.

We would also advocate for the development of the Exchange as a one-stop, inclusive shop for both public and private health insurance plans, including Medicaid and All Kids, and the inclusion of the full range of women's reproductive health services in plans offered in the Exchange, including maternity and newborn care; full

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson

Kay Loomis
Wabash Area Development, Inc.

Vice-Chairperson

Loretta Lattyak
Children's Memorial Hospital

Secretary

Ellen Mason, MD
John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook
County

Treasurer

Mary Driscoll
Illinois Department of Public Health

Past Chairperson

Virginia Martinez
Mexican American Legal Defense and
Educational Fund

Elyse Forkosh Cutler
Advocate Health Care

Shirley Fleming
Private Healthcare Consultant

H. Garry Gardner, MD
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of
Pediatrics

Arden Handler
University of Illinois at Chicago, School of
Public Health

Blanca Lopez
Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task
Force

Cynthia Mears, MD
Children's Memorial Hospital

Dennis L. Vickers, MD
Sinai Children's Hospital

Marguerite Young
Firman Community Services

Executive Director
Janine Lewis

pediatric coverage, including vision and dental; preventive services; mental health services; prescription drugs, including contraceptives and fertility treatments; and abortion care coverage.

Although we understand that the basic benefits, such as preventive care, are mandated to be included in the Exchange, states will have the option to exclude abortion care coverage as an option. By denying this coverage, Illinois would be restricting a women's right to access a full range of safe and legal reproductive services. Thus, we implore the Council to allow access to abortion care coverage as part of the Exchange.

Thank you in advance for your support and the opportunity to represent our constituencies. We hope that you will see the Coalition as a resource. I will submit these remarks in written format as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Janine Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janine" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Lewis".

Janine Lewis
Executive Director